AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (cancelled)

2. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 43, wherein:

the insufflation means are reusable; and

the contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from being carried by the insufflation medium to the insufflation means.

3. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claim [[43]] 41 or claim 2, wherein:

the insufflation means are reusable; and

the contamination prevention means are effective to prevent a contaminant from being carried by the insufflation medium to the patient being examined.

4. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims [[43]] 41 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a non-return valve interposed between the insufflation means and the speculum.

5. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims [[43]] 41 or 2 wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a filter.

6. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims [[43]] 41 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a precipitator.

7. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to any one of claims [[43]] 41 or 2 wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a tortuous passageway.

8. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims [[43]] 41 or 2, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a combination of two or more members selected from the group consisting of non-return valves, filters, precipitators and tortuous passageways.

9. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 2, wherein:
the insufflation means comprise a resiliently compressible squeeze bulb; and
the insufflation medium is air.

10. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 41, wherein the insufflation means are connected with the speculum and are disposable.

11. (cancelled)

12. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim [[11]] 41 wherein the observation window is integral with the speculum.

13. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to ~~claims 11 or~~ claim 12 wherein the observation window is selectively openable.

14. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to ~~claims 11 or~~ claim 12, wherein the observation window is hingedly attached to the speculum.

15. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, [[11]] or 12, wherein the insufflation means communicate with an interior region of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with the speculum.

16. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, [[11]] or 12 wherein the insufflation means communicate with an interior region of the speculum via an inlet duct associated with an eyepiece.

17. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 16, wherein the eyepiece is disposable.

18. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 43, 2, 10, [[11]] or 12, wherein the contamination prevention means are disposable.

19. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 43, 2, 10, [[11]] or 12, wherein the contamination prevention means are effectively integral with the speculum.

20. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 43, 2, 10, [[11]] or 12, further comprising:

an inlet port for operatively connecting the insufflation means with the speculum and permitting internal pressurization of the speculum; and

the contamination prevention means adapted to prevent the insufflation medium from passing from an internal side to an external side of the inlet port while the insufflation medium is in use.

21. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope according to claims 41, 2, 10, [[11,]] or 12, further comprising obturation means for facilitating insertion of the spectrum into the bowel cavity of the patent.

22. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:

an obturator having an elongated stem adapted to pass axially though the speculum; and

a head adapted to protrude at least partially beyond the insertion end, the head connected to the elongated stem.

23. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 22, wherein the obturator may axially withdraw through the observation end of the sigmoidoscope.

24. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 23, wherein the observation window is adapted to be closed and sealed after the obturator is withdrawn.

25. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 21, wherein the obturation means comprise:

a hollow, generally tubular obturation sleeve slidably disposed in axial telescopic engagement with the speculum;

a plurality of resiliently deformable petal formations connected to the insertion end and selectively movable between a domed closed configuration a withdrawn open configuration.

26. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 25, wherein:

the obturator is external to the speculum; and

the petal formations are generally curved inwardly toward one another.

27. (original) A sigmoidoscope according to claim 26 wherein the petal formations are resiliently biased inwardly toward the closed configuration and are displaced progressively outwardly toward the open configuration by manual sliding of the obturation sleeve away from the insertion end.

28. (previously presented) The disposable speculum of claim [[43]] 41, further comprising:

a connection to the reusable insufflation means; and

contamination prevention means for preventing contaminated insufflation medium from contacting the insufflation means.

29. (original) A speculum according to claim 28, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a non-return valve.

30. (original) A speculum according to claim 28 or claim 29, wherein the contamination prevention means comprise a filter.

31. (original) A speculum according to any one of claims 28 or 29,wherein the connection comprises an eyepiece.

32. (original) A speculum according to any one of claims 28 or 29, wherein the insufflation means comprises an insufflation bulb.

33. (original) A speculum according to claim 28, further comprising coupling means for optically coupling a light source at an outer circumferential edge of the speculum.

34. (original) A speculum according to claim 33, further comprising:

an observation means; and

a releasable coupling operably connecting the observation means to the light source adapted for releasable coupling to reusable observation means.

35. (original) A speculum according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light conducting system.

36. (original) A speculum according to claim 34, wherein the observation means comprise a light imaging system.

37. (original) A speculum according to claim 35 or 36, wherein the observation means is connected to the speculum via an external connection head.

38. (original) A speculum according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, further comprising a hollow tubular body having ~~good~~ light transmission properties.

39. (original) A speculum according to any one of claims 28, 29, 33, 34, 35 or 36, wherein the speculum is made of a plastic.

40. (previously presented) The disposable speculum of claim 41, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the integral manually operable insufflation means is adapted for disposal with the speculum to prevent cross contamination between patients due to contamination of the insufflation medium.

41. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope comprising:

a disposable speculum comprising:

an elongate substantially rigid tube having an observation end and an insertion end;

a side wall extending along the substantially rigid tube from the observation end to the insertion end and defining a lumen; wherein

the insertion end of the speculum is adapted for insertion into the rectum and sigmoid colon of a patient;

connection means adjacent the observation end of the speculum adapted to allow a reusable light source to be connected to the observation end and to project light through the speculum into the rectum and sigmoid colon of the patient; [[and]]

contamination prevention means adapted to isolate the light source from the lumen; and

manually operable insufflation means adapted to insufflate the ~~colon~~ rectum and sigmoid of the patient through the speculum with an insufflation medium susceptible to contamination from within the rectum and sigmoid colon, the insufflation medium being conveyed directly from the insufflation means to the lumen by a gas conveying insufflation tube without contacting the light source.

42. (previously presented) A sigmoidoscope as claimed in claim 41, the contamination prevention means further comprising a gas-tight window disposed between the lumen of the speculum and the connection means for the light source.

43. (cancelled)